

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *The Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and the Connect USVI Fund*, WC Docket No. 18-143; *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Report and Order and Order on Review (April 19, 2023).

Hurricane season will be underway in just a few weeks. The damage these storms can do is now all too familiar because the images—homes torn apart, flooded streets, and downed power lines—linger. I know because I have seen it up close and witnessed first-hand how dangerous weather can harm communications. I saw it when I visited Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria and again last year after Hurricane Fiona, when I met with officials charged with emergency response, including Governor Pedro Pierluisi and members of the Telecommunications Regulatory Board. What I also saw on this most recent trip was incredible progress with communications networks that were more resilient and restored more quickly after a major weather event than ever before. That’s in large part a result of the Federal Communications Commission’s efforts through the Bringing Puerto Rico Together Fund. For the last three years, this fund and the Connect USVI Fund have provided support to carriers to strengthen networks in the Caribbean region. Today, I am pleased that the agency has determined a way forward for this effort that provides clarity for providers as they continue efforts to harden, restore, and expand communications networks.